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The Community Agency and
Its Responsibility to
the Community

Care and Cost in an
Institution for Children

A Board Member's View
of a Cost Study

Statewide Agency Services

HENRIETTA L. GORDON, Editor

CHILD WELFARE is a forum for discussion in print of child welfare problems and the programs and skills needed to solve them. Endorsement does not necessarily go with the printing of opinions expressed over a signature.

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THE COMMUNITY AGENCY AND ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO THE COMMUNITY*

Victor Weingarten
Consultant on Public Relations

... I will confine myself to one phase of an agency's responsibility to the community. I don't want to talk about how well community agencies do their job because, as far as I know, most of them do a wonderful job with the funds and facilities they have. And if they don't, I'm not the one to tell them. I'm not a social worker. I get into the field through the back door. I am a public relations man, a translator, an interpreter. I don't care if a practice is New York school or Pennsylvania school, functional or diagnostic. All I want is to understand it enough so that I can make the reason for it clear to the next fellow.¹

Sometimes it is hard to make a particular reason clear. It can be tough going to persuade a couple who want to adopt a baby to bypass the doctor making placements down the street—but I think it is important to try.

I am not sure that social agencies always realize how important it is to explain, that they *accept* explaining and prodding and warning as one of their big responsibilities to the community. And yet I think it is a major responsibility, implicit in the very nature of the community agency. For the social agency is the conscience of the community. It is the community gadfly, the Socratic stumbling block to any notion that this is the best of all possible worlds. It is hard to be your brother's keeper when you only see him once a year at a family reunion. And most of us are too busy commuting to do each other's chores. But each child who goes off to a fresh air camp, each baby who gets a proud new father and mother, each boy in trouble who gets treatment instead of a whipping, each family sup-

ported through crisis by foster care, each mother receiving an ADC allotment is really getting neighborly service.

The service may be of specialized quality and caliber, but basically the community agency is filling the role that the individual members of the community no longer are able to fill for each other. And equally basic, every governmental allotment and every family contribution is a symbol of individual affection. We no longer give baskets to the poor; we give a check to the drive. The check does more lasting good to the recipient, I am sure. I am not so sure it does more for the giver. We ought to make our contributors *feel* good. The only way we can do that is to share with them what we are doing with their money.

You Are the Interpreter

And if they are not giving us enough—whoever they may be—we owe it to them, too, to make them feel guilty. That's part of our role as collective conscience. We are the still, small voice. What I am here to say is that our voice doesn't have to be quite as small as we make it.

How shall we make our voice bigger? Not by bigger headlines or longer radio spots or brighter-colored TV dramas, although these would be nice too. That's my business, but I will tell you frankly that good interpretation considers media only one of many tools. *You* are the real communicators. What *you* do every day, how you *talk*, how you *explain*, how *everyone* in your agency *treats* client and visitor alike affect the esteem in which you are held in the community.

Consider foster care. All over the country we are looking for more and more good foster homes. Newspapers, magazines, radio, tele-

*This is a portion of a paper delivered at the New England Regional Conference, Boston, Mass., March 1956.

¹I have been in the translation business long enough to have learned that there usually is a reason.

vision can all help us find more boarding homes. But they can't help us as much as we can help ourselves. Of this I am convinced.

An agency with which we had worked had the problem of finding a more selective source for foster parents. Publicity appeals brought applicants but too often the applicants were not suitable. It was a wasteful procedure. It hurt people's feelings needlessly. It made the agency look foolish to plead for foster parents and then turn down candidates when they appeared. It was poor public relations. So we tried a new tack.

We did an analysis of where our present foster homes came from and found that fifty-five percent, the greatest number as well as the most successful, came by referral from other satisfied foster parents. In addition to newspaper stories and radio and TV spots, we put down our buckets where we were. We recommended, and the agency hired, a warm, engaging woman whose children were off at school and put her to work keeping in touch with the agency's foster parents. She organized teas and talks, got the board to throw a big party which the entire staff and all the foster parents attended. We even paid for sitters for some. She made calls, listened to anecdotes, made the foster mothers and fathers feel like the important people they were. (I was told this process is called "giving them status.") Then she solicited the names of relatives and friends who might also be interested in being foster parents. Results? Homes the agency could use. Was all this interpretation? It most certainly was—the best.

For this may be treason, but interpretation is not an end in itself. It is only a means toward a result. It is the result that counts, not how it is achieved. It is good to have a story in *Life*. You get a clipping for your files. I get an exhibit for my office. More children get foster homes. But any one of those foster homes will be no better or no worse than the one that might result if your secretary gave some good answers when the man who repairs your typewriters asked

what your agency did, anyhow. He might well be a lead to a good foster home.

In the same way, the \$5 contribution that comes in to a family service agency as a result of a newspaper story is important, but it will buy no more and no less than the grateful \$5 sent by a client who was finally able to hold on to a job after a few months of good solid counseling. And how do you get your board members? By public appeals? Or by the contagious enthusiasm of the board member who knows and likes the staff, who is given more to do than signing letters asking for money, who is actually telephoned when, at long last, you find a home for that little French-Canadian girl?

It's amazing how many things turn out to be public relations when you really think about them. You find yourself like the man who was flabbergasted to discover he was talking prose all his life.

Talking Face-to-Face

There is no better example of the diffuse aspects of interpretation than adoption. The average citizen isn't too sure of the difference between foster care and adoption. He has heard that the adoption process is full of red tape. He knows there is a black market somewhere. He knows that agencies specialize in turning down perfectly suitable couples anxious to adopt the babies in which they abound. He even knows a couple whose marriage could have been saved if they had been given a child. And yet, somehow—by skillful pounding in the papers, the magazines, the radio and television—you get him to telephone your agency to ask about the possibilities of getting a baby. Your switchboard operator talks to him between incoming and outgoing calls and ascertains that his wife is 40 and he is 45. Too old to get a baby at her agency, she tells him, and that is that. Public relations? Absolutely. Couldn't be worse, either.

And don't shake your heads that it couldn't happen. Maybe not in *your* agency. But I know the excellent agency in which it did happen, just that way. No telephone operator should do any kind of interviewing no

matter how talented she may be. She should take the name and address of the caller, if no one is immediately available to talk to him. . . .

A direct contact with a professional person is more effective. He may even be interested in an older child and you can tell him about them. If he still meets your eligibility requirements and if he still wants to apply, wonderful. If he doesn't, there will be less chance of his telling friends that *you* turned him down. There is no substitute for a satisfied customer. You have to take the time to satisfy.

In the same way, a mimeographed press release may salve your conscience when you issue a statement about the dangers of independent placement of infants. But more could be accomplished if this were followed up by visits to hospitals to make sure they know where to send unmarried mothers for help. If you want to impress doctors about why they should not attempt to match babies and adoptive parents, go directly to the medical societies, to the obstetrical journals, and to hospital staff meetings to make your pitch. Aim straight when you want to reach a target.

I don't mean to say that we should return to the crank telephone era in communications. We just must not be so overwhelmed with the flood of words coming over mass media that we overlook the basic value of talking face-to-face. Then, having made the most of our face-to-face opportunities, we will find ourselves better equipped to jump into the ocean of mass communications. For it is an ocean, make no mistake about it. And the water can be very cold. . . .

Adapting to Terms of Mass Media

Television programs which want to use "real" children pose a current problem. I understand how agencies feel. They have a sound and time-honored concept of confidentiality. But how are you going to use some of this mass communication such as the great persuasive medium of television unless you realize that sometimes it may be

wise to make exceptions. Television is a *visual* medium. What are you going to show? Buildings? Child actors? A blank screen, while a commentator talks off-stage? Should we show the children who actually need help and get them help, or do we do better to stick to rigid interpretations and let the children grow old—but unseen—in their institutions?

Your rules were made to help the people for whom you work. If you can help them more by bending the rules, then I think you must be flexible enough to make exceptions. The Children's Shelter in New York City sometimes sleeps its babies two to a crib, it is so crowded. What is ultimately better for the children? To show New Yorkers how they house their temporary charges, or to forbid photographers? I have no doubts about the answer to that question. It is the kind of question agencies must face when they set out to use mass media.

I think one reason social workers sometimes shy away from an affirmative use of mass media is that they are frightened by spotlights. Social workers are gentle folk, and it doesn't seem quite proper to shout. You dig up the statistics and furnish the examples and if you are lucky enough to produce a page one story or a radio bulletin, it makes you uneasy. But politeness didn't abolish child labor or regulate factories or pasteurize milk or push through old age and survivors' insurance and aid to dependent children. Good, honest, loudmouthed crusading did it. If the headlines look big and black, you shouldn't get scared. You should be exhilarated.

For if you really want to use mass media—newspapers, magazines, radio, television—if you really mean it and don't say it because it sounds good, you have to use them on their own terms. You may not always agree with the terms but you have the obligation to understand them and do your best to adapt to them, where they can't see a way of adapting to yours.

To begin with, your mass media are commercial, geared to reach the greatest num-

bers of people. And they do. Fifty million daily newspapers are circulated. Sixty millions view a good TV show. There are hundreds of magazines—most of them loaded with pictures so you don't even have to think too hard.

But the papers do exist and circulate. The television programs are seen—and heard. The picture magazines are read. This is their function and, obviously, is their value to you. The more people they can reach with their message—and yours—the better off you both will be. For various reasons radio and television will give time; and editors, because they want to help, will give space to do-good organizations. They call it “public service,” and all too often they write off public service time and space with a groan.

They know before they begin that it is going to be a bore. Obviously it needn't be, and it shouldn't be. The most effective use of public service time—and space—is when it falls into the pattern of its medium, when it competes on an equal basis with the programs and articles surrounding it. *True Confessions* is not the *Atlantic Monthly*, and a soap opera is not a forum. Each has its place. We once bludgeoned an agency into letting the director of its home for unmarried mothers write a series for *True Confessions* on the grounds she was more likely to reach potential unmarried mothers in the pulps than in the pages of the *Atlantic* or *Harper's*. It's sad, but true. Too often we'll sacrifice point of sales for prestige. It shouldn't be done. Nor can one program be made to serve many purposes. You cannot cover adoption, foster care, public health, recruiting and residential treatment in a half-hour show. If you try, you would do better to skip the whole thing.

So, if you use mass media, you have to be prepared to do so on their terms, not yours. . . .

Reporters and producers and editors generally want to work fast. They cut corners. They jump to conclusions. They check once if you are lucky. They have deadlines. They keep their eyes on the clock. Social workers

are not clock-watchers. They work by conference. They go slowly because they are aware of the dangers of rushing people against their will. They do not go into battle alone. They are supervised. Communications doesn't work that way. It not only will take time. It will sometimes want to work at the wrong time. That is, the wrong time for you. Whatever time reporters and producers and editors want to work with you generally has to be the right time. You have to do it their way—when the story is timely for them. You may have to travel an hour to get to a studio to record a five-minute spot, but if you want to have the spot, you will have to travel—and smile. Sometimes instead of getting a spot, you will find yourself on one. Closing your door and shutting off the telephone is no way to get off.

How To Use Mass Media Effectively

Not too long ago, the League was asked to help a welfare department in real trouble. Some months before, foster parents had taken a child with the understanding, they said, that they could adopt it if it ever became available. A few years later the agency told the parents the child would be adopted, but not through them. The agency had good reason, but it wasn't talking. The foster parents were, however. They called the newspapers. When the papers called the agency for information they got the stock answer: “No comment.” It was an answer that was to haunt the agency. The newspapers went to town on it. Each step in the messy procedure that followed was covered by the papers. Months later when the agency started a campaign for foster homes, it found that people remembered the episode of the foster parents and knew none of the mitigating circumstances. How could they? The agency had never told its side. Subsequently, a radio program dramatized the episode and reopened the old wounds. Later it was planned for TV. The only reason it didn't get on television in its old horrible form was that the script was submitted to the League in accordance with an agreement we have worked

out with the network, and we were able to persuade them to alter it in light of the true facts in the case.

Now it is very possible that the agency supervisor had no information he could give the press at the moment he was called. All he had to do was say so. Usually they will respect your confidence. . . .

Take our experience with the famous Pearl Buck story on adoption in the *Woman's Home Companion*. Unfair, misleading—in many ways, yes. We went to the editor, told him what we thought and gave him the reasons why. Someone once said of Al Smith he could make statistics sit up, beg, roll over and bark. We didn't accomplish quite that much with our statistics but when we showed Bob Moskin that far from having children that wait, we have 1,400,000 applicants—700,000 couples—for 70,000 babies, he listened with great interest. The problem, we told him, was not *all* babies, but *some* babies—Negro babies, Puerto Rican babies, Mexican babies, minority babies, older children and so on. The result was that instead of publishing the second Pearl Buck article it had scheduled, the *Companion* published a kind of battle page, with our own Joe Reid answering some knotty questions about adoption. . . .

In recent months we've had good adoption stories in *Pageant*, *Coronet*, the *New York Times Sunday Magazine*. We have one coming up in *Cosmopolitan* on a handicapped child. We've had "Babies for the Brave" in the *Saturday Evening Post*.

It pays to be helpful, as well as available. We have tried to be both, over a fairly long period of time, and as our relationship with the various media has strengthened, so has our security. I realized this when NBC sent over a script for us to check. Both the League staff and I were unhappy with the way some of the social work content was handled. We called the agency about which the script had been written and the agency said it too had many reservations, but that it did not want to jeopardize the production and therefore was reluctant to urge too many changes. We

suggested the changes, and NBC went along with us because it knows by now that we don't find fault just to be captious. We have worked together long enough and well enough to trust each other's judgment in the fields that rightly concern us.

This is where experience pays off. The agency was probably right. You've got to know the media people with whom you are dealing. No one takes kindly to criticism, especially a writer and producer of an hour-long TV show that cost close to \$120,000—\$70,000 for the time and \$50,000 for the production. Yet the show¹ went on, with the changes, and I think was one of the best adoption stories ever done on TV.

At that, the situation I described is unusual. An agency isn't generally reluctant to suggest changes in a script. Often it wants to rewrite the whole thing. If the social worker is described as small and plump, the agency wants her to be tall and thin. If the caseworker asks a leading question, the agency is unhappy because casework doesn't work that way. Sometimes it takes weeks and months for an actual client to reach the point where he will ask himself the question the caseworker asks in the script. But the script generally is to take a half hour, minus time for commercials, and it is to tell a complete story. If the caseworker can't ask the question, the story will bog down. Again, we have to settle for the medium's way of telling the story, not our own, so long as the overall picture we get is a true one.

What is truth is a very pertinent question when it comes to interpretation anyhow. A pillar and a lighted candle may be a truer projection of a cathedral for television purposes than a replica of St. Peter's. A flash of insight may hold more truth than an hour of explanation. We do not really have to show the hours that go into training, the disappointments, the provocations, the relationships with social workers as well unless they are pertinent to our story. What we can hope for is overall truth, not super-accurate detail

¹ Armstrong Circle Theatre program, "A Baby Named X," April 13th, 1956.

that only social workers would notice anyhow.

Agency Needs Public Relations Person

You will have noticed by now, I think, that much of what I think is good public relations is really a keeping of the lines of communications open—between agency and staff, between staff and clients, between agency and board, between board and community. Someone in the agency should be responsible for seeing that those lines are kept clear. I don't think it should necessarily be the job of the executive director, but it doesn't have to be the job of a full-time professional person either. It could be a part-time person, it could be a staff member, it could be an outside person who is willing to lend a hand with public relations. In some communities, private industry will lend its public relations services for consultation or work on a specific project. Sometimes a local newspaper or radio station will be willing to lend a hand. It doesn't hurt to ask. Social workers aren't the only people who find ego-satisfaction in being helpful.

But however the job of public relations linesman is set up, it should be organized to be available on an all-year basis. You never know when you are going to get a hurricane or blizzard. It isn't enough to type up releases and take reporters out to lunch during Chest time or Red Feather time or United Fund time. Someone has to be available all the time—when a foster child is left standing on the steps of a welfare department, or a runaway schizophrenic gets involved in a hold-up, or when an executive director gets a citation, or a reporter just has to have a story on children to fill a Sunday column.

And not only does your liaison person have to be available but anyone else who may be needed to tell a story or amplify a script should be available, too. An agency should have a receptive climate. Social workers are not high priests and priestesses guarding impenetrable mysteries, but sometimes they act as if they think they were. Sometimes a caseworker may be asked to break an appointment with a client to talk to a reporter

doing a feature story. If she is a good caseworker, her first impulse will be to resent it. But she would resent it if the story turned out to be inaccurate, too. And she should be helped to see that she may be rendering her client a service that outweighs the lost hour. As that distinguished Harvard man, James Russell Lowell, once said:

"The pressure of public opinion is like the pressure of the atmosphere; you can't see it—but all the same, it is sixteen pounds to the square inch."

If the caseworker is helping to guide that unseen pressure of public opinion in the direction of better understanding of social work needs, she is doing her job for the day. For this is the pressure that is felt in contributions received and moral support noted. It is felt in the attitude of public officials and grants voted. It is reflected in the devotion of board members. I think it is even reflected in the performance of the agency staff itself. Social workers are human beings, with human frailties and vanities. I think they like to be noticed and they like to be understood. They work better in the sunlight of approbation.

And while we are on the subject of social workers being just like everyone else, let us please take care that they talk like everyone else, too. English, I mean. Not social workese. Use jargon, if you must, among yourselves but not in mixed company. Implement, focus and methodologize, formulate, diagnose and individualize in your own peer group, but don't let a word sneak outside. Don't, please, write releases with leads like this:

"The Bender-Gestalt test attempts to show the maturation level of a child in the visual motor Gestalt function."

I picked that one up in the press room of the American Orthopsychiatric Association—it didn't get into the papers. I can't make up my mind whether it is worse than this one from the National Conference of Social Work:

"The paper considers the dynamic factors in compulsive migrancy, a pathological behavioral syndrome. The neurotic migrant is in flight from a traumatic situa-

tion, which is characterized by a dependency crisis with acute narcissitic disappointment, a sense of precipitous withdrawal and an outpouring of rage impulses with overwhelming fears of retaliation."

Both, I grant you, are horrible examples, but not much more horrible than many a release that turns up in the press room at social work conferences.

Actually it isn't the jargon that's so bad as the state of mind it clothes. Social workers are eager to recruit young people into the field. It is helpful to tell them about the salaries and working conditions, but that isn't going to convince anyone really. What is going to bring young people in is a ringing emphasis on the goodness of social work, the manifold opportunities it offers to serve people. It is a varied profession. You can concentrate on babies, on adolescents, on the aged, on families, on the sick, on the disturbed. You work at a desk or out in the field, you can speak or you can write. It is an attractive profession. You mustn't cover up its graces in baggy words.

Why, I have even known the covering-up process to be an actual, physical reality. We once obtained not only free radio time for a recruiting drama but the services—for free—of Shirley Booth as the social worker who was to be the narrator. But the organization for whom we were doing this would have none of her. She had just appeared in "Come Back, Little Sheba," and they thought she might give her audience a frowsy mental picture. So we got Vanessa Brown instead. She was then the "femme fatale" in the "Seven Year Itch." We were sure *she* would appeal to the young men and women who were the object of this particular recruiting attempt. But no. She didn't do either. The dress she happened to wear in her publicity pictures was too low-cut. We did use her eventually though. My clients realized belatedly that the medium was radio.

There is a whole series of morals here, but I won't bore you with them. One, however, is obvious. If you are going to use mass media, you must know them as well as respect them. . . .

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CARE AND COST IN AN INSTITUTION FOR CHILDREN*

Martin Wolins

Director of Research
Child Welfare League of America

The following material is a preliminary report of a two-year study of care and cost in an institution for disturbed children.

TWO YEARS AGO the Child Welfare League of America and the U. S. Children's Bureau began a study of the cost of institutional care at Pleasantville Cottage School, one of the institutions maintained by the Jewish Child Care Association of New York. The purpose of this study was development of a method of computing cost of child care in an institution which would be more meaningful, more accurate and more comparable from one setting to another than the traditional per capita data. In order that such a method be developed and its feasibility and productiveness tested, a number of factors bearing on cost or on the procedures for its computation had to be examined and classified. Also, these factors had to undergo test in an actual attempt to produce cost data—the product being the ultimate measure of success or failure of the method used. What, then, were some of the factors in institutional care, in method of cost computation and what were some of the findings that test the productiveness of procedures and concepts employed?

Three factors of institutional care were primarily considered. These were setting, program of service and units.

Setting

In each institution, present day purposes are implemented against a background of historical development, availability of resources to meet institutional needs such as finances, personnel and plant, and ever-present community requirements for service. The setting for our cost study is an institution serving approximately 200 children in various stages of personal and familial disturbance. It is an institution with a long his-

tory of service to the metropolitan New York community. Its plant consists of an adequate number of cottages, and an adequate amount of administrative, school and recreational space to serve the present population.

Administratively, the institution is part of the Jewish Child Care Association of New York which, aside from the services offered at Pleasantville, provides a wide range of child placement facilities. Financing is derived mainly from the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York (a fund-raising and planning body), Greater New York Fund (also a fund-raising body), from governmental reimbursements for care given to children under their jurisdiction and, to a much lesser extent, from payments of families whose children are receiving care.

Institutional purposes are carried out against the background of this setting. These purposes are mainly three—the first paramount, the others subsidiary. The purposes of the institution under study are care and treatment of children, training of certain categories of professional staff, and the production of some research. To achieve these purposes (primarily the purpose of care and treatment of children) the institution provides a residential-educational and treatment program. Residential-educational aspects of the program include food, shelter, clothing, medical-dental care, a supervised cottage and activity structure and an intramural grade school. Treatment, which in an institution of the type exemplified by Pleasantville, is all pervading, is concentrated mainly around social work, psychiatry, psychology and remedial education.

Units of Service

The primary purpose of the institution—care and treatment of children—is achieved

* Based upon a paper presented at the National Conference of Social Work, St. Louis, Mo., May 22, 1956.

through the intake, admission, treatment and appropriately arranged discharge of children. This whole process, from the initial screening to determine whether a child may be suitably served by the agency to treatment related discharge or after-care, is generally known as *a case*. In this study it has been called a *service unit*, as it designates a completed sequence of services which are generally given during the institutional placement of a child. Such a unit has meaning since the sequence of services is quite general among institutions, but it is a very large and, for the purpose of measurement of cost, a most unwieldy unit. In order to reduce it to measurable dimensions, it has been broken into its component parts or so-called *work units*.¹

Now, these work units are nothing radically new in social work—they only attempt to specify the beginnings and endings of what were previously vaguely defined entities. Eight such work units have been identified in institutional care. They are: *screening*, or the process of deciding whether the problem is within the service limits of the agency; *intake*, or the process of determining where and how service will be given; *pre-admission*, or the working with the child and family in the process of placing the child in care; *admission*, the actual transfer of custody from home to institution; *institutional adjustment*, or the period when institutional emphasis is on the child's mode of relating to institutional environment; *life adjustment*, (treatment) when the emphasis is on the child's future relation to the environment in his community; *discharge*, or the process of preparing the child and his family for his return to the community; and *after-care*, the non-residential phase of the discharge process with the aim of the child's re-integration in his community. Work units, then, are identifiable phases in the processing of a case.

¹ The concepts of work units and service units were developed by Edward E. Schwartz in a study conducted at the Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society, Chicago.

Measuring and Computing Costs

When we approach the matter of measuring cost, the question that arises immediately is: "The cost of what and how computed?" To the question: "The cost of what?" the answer seems quite direct—the cost of work units and service units. Since it is the primary purpose of institutional care to provide service to children, the most meaningful budgetary units are those that reflect the amount of service performed, rather than the cost of a category of personnel or of material goods. While the latter are necessary, they are only a step to the former and this is true both in achieving the purposes of the institution and in computing the cost of service.

The question on procedures for computing cost of institutional care is, however, not answered so easily. It is actually a twofold question relating both to inclusiveness of cost data and to methods for arriving at them. On the matter of inclusiveness it is necessary to point out that, in theory, the limits of what may be considered included in the cost of providing institutional care may on the one extreme be the budgeted monetary expenditures of the institution, and on the other extreme the "social costs" of providing the service including fund raising, volunteer services, depreciation, tax exemptions and other "hidden" costs along with the very visible budgeted expenditures. As long as institutions continue to locate the limits of what they consider cost of care disparately within such a very broad continuum, comparison of cost from one setting to another is unlikely to be meaningful. In the present study, costs of operating the services of the institution were defined to include all funds specifically allocated to the institution or those expended in its behalf by the parent agency. Admittedly, this is not an exhaustive definition as it fails to account for all the "hidden" items in "social cost," but it is the best definition that could be implemented in this study and also a meaningful definition since its limits are the total out-of-the-treasury expenditures of the agency.

Methods for arriving at the cost had to include some procedure for charging directly to the various work units—intakes, admissions, discharges—as much as possible of the expense that went into producing them. To do so, a time study was conducted for those categories of staff whose activities were immediately affected by the work unit in which a child found himself at a given time, and the problems, strengths and other characteristics of the child himself and his family. If this method is used, cost of this staff time could be arrived at if cost of personnel is known and such cost may then be merged with other expenditures, such as those for shelter and food, which are essentially unaffected by the characteristics of the individual child.

Thus viewed, the cost of a work unit consists of a background of daily or monthly “fixed costs” that vary little from one child to another, and of “variable costs” that are related to characteristics of a child and his work unit position and vary considerably between children and work units. Jointly, the costs of work units from screening through discharge and after-care constitute the cost of completing service to a case.

Omitting the very extensive methodological detail required in such a study of cost² (in analysis of the institution’s line budget in detailed time recording by nine categories of staff, in definition of children’s characteristics, in relating cost to work units and to characteristics of children), it is possible to view a few examples of data produced by the study.

Converting to “Service Budget”

First, relation of the traditional line budget to work unit cost computation required its complete reorganization to reflect the cost of service categories rather than categories of expenditure. For example, the provision of services by one cottage parent includes the expenditure of funds from four out of five of the traditional budgetary groupings employed by the institution. The cottage parent

² An extensive report on the methodology and findings of the study will be published in 1957.

receives a salary—an expenditure entered under the category “salaries and wages”; he receives quarters, the repair and maintenance of which are charged under maintenance; he receives food and linens, charged under institutional operation; and he is the beneficiary of various insurance-type programs, the cost of which is entered in the category “fixed charges.” In order to determine the cost of specific services such as those offered by cottage staff, for example, the line budget must be converted to a “service budget.” A six-months gross “service budget” for Pleasantville contains the following items with their cost and proportional relationship to the whole.

<i>Residential Care</i>		<i>Per Cent of Total Cost of Institutional Operation</i>
Housing* (including cottages, school and activity)	\$51,500.00	12.9%
Meals* (prepared and served to children)	47,000.00	11.8%
Children's clothing and its maintenance	16,900.00	4.2%
Household staff (porters, watchmen)	20,600.00	5.2%
Medical-dental service	14,000.00	3.5%
Cottage staff	65,800.00	16.6%
School	Tax supported	
Activity programs (staff and supplies)	26,800.00	6.8%
General residential expenditures	13,500.00	3.4%
Total	\$256,100.00	64.4%
<i>Treatment Program</i>		
Casework service	\$26,000.00	6.6%
Clerical	5,300.00	1.3%
Psychiatry	11,700.00	2.9%
Remedial education	6,500.00	1.6%
Psychology	2,700.00	.7%
Intake (part of cost of central intake)	17,700.00	4.5%
Total	\$69,900.00	17.6%
Administration (resident and part of central)	71,500.00	18.0%
Total cost of institutional care (6 mos.)	\$397,500.00	100.0%

* Housing and meals include the full cost of consumable product or service. In the case of housing it includes cost of utilities, repairs, replacements, servicing of grounds, and other expenditures required for the provision of inhabitable space. Cost of space is then charged on a 100-cubic-foot basis.

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Such a "service budget," unlike the line budget that enters into its construction, reveals immediately the cost of certain services. As such, it lends itself to the formulation of certain administrative and policy decisions. It introduces a known cost factor into the determination of such questions as, for example, the intra- or extramural provision of medical and dental care, the panel rather than staff provision of psychology, the continued use, remodeling or abandonment of the present plant.

Of course, these questions cannot and should not be decided on the basis of cost alone. It is not the purpose of an institution to save or spend funds but to care for children. Knowledge of cost can, however, provide the fiscal basis for decisions maximizing the care and treatment services that may be provided within the always limited available resources.

Computing Unit Cost

Second, data on cost of cottage staff, case-work, psychiatry and other services, when available as they become in the "service budget" may next be converted to cost for a unit of time, say a minute. Knowing the cost of psychiatry and the number of minutes psychiatrists worked during a six-month period, for example, allows a determination of psychiatric costs per minute. If it is known how many minutes of psychiatry go into an intake or a discharge it is possible to compute the cost of providing that psychiatry. Similarly, cost may be computed for other

staff services that may be affected by the position of the work unit and the characteristics of children. The data from time recording and from the budgetary analysis may thus provide information on the amount of staff time, on the average, used for completion of certain work units, the average cost of completing such units, the average cost of a service unit (case) based on the cost of units from screening through after-care, and the effect of characteristics of children on the time and monetary requirements.

Social work operations may be used as an example of computations regarding time and dollar expenditures required to complete work units and service units. From the time study are derived the minute costs of social work for each work unit.³ The budgetary analysis yields costs of staff. Jointly these data may be incorporated into a table that indicates both the staff time and funds required to provide service to a work unit or in sum to a service unit. Thus Table I shows that a service unit involves a personnel and financial commitment by the agency which in case of social work extends over some 1,240 days (41 months), involves 11,280 minutes (188 hours) of caseworker and supervisor time and costs approximately \$737.

How can such information be used in

³ In the case of a very extensive unit such as life adjustment which lasts on the average 863 days, the monthly time input is averaged and multiplied by the number of months the child is likely to remain in the unit.

Table I

Mean Time and Cost Requirements of Social Work for the Completion of Work Units and Service Units

Means of	Work Unit									Service Unit
	Screen- ing	In- take	Pre- Admis- sion	Ad- mis- sion	Institu- tional Adjust- ment	Life Adjust- ment	Dis- charge	After- Care	Serv- ice to Closed Cases	
Duration in days	5	65	15	1	54	863	94	143	..	1,240 *
Minutes of service	23	506	495	144	835	7,640	750	835	52	11,280 *
Cost in dollars	1.22	26.32	32.67	9.53	55.11	504.24	49.50	55.11	3.43	737.13 *

* These totals require minor modification which will not be undertaken here. An example of such modification is the necessity to multiply the cost of screening by the number of screenings needed to achieve an admission in order to get the actual cost of social work in a case. The actual cost of social work and other services is given in Table II.

furthering the purposes of the institution? Certainly, knowledge of the extent to which the agency commits its resources is helpful in planning. The \$737 of social work cost, which is implicit in the acceptance of one case for institutional care, should affect the budget not only for the year when intake was accomplished, but for a full 41 months from the date of screening. Similarly, cost of a given unit may also be used in decisions pertaining to type of service to be offered. For example, the admission work unit consists primarily of transferring the child from New York City and introducing him to the institution including his cottage. At present this is the function of social workers. In view of the scarcity of trained social work staff, it could be accomplished by some other staff category. Although such a decision would and should be made primarily on the basis of treatment considerations, knowledge that cost of social work in that unit is only 1.3% of the total cost of social work in a case would very likely affect the decision.

When the time and cost of other staff categories' services in each work unit are computed similarly to social work it is possible to arrive at the total cost of a service unit. This would consist of the variable costs and the fixed costs previously discussed. In aggregate they are nearly \$12,000 for the average case. That is, when the agency admits a case for care in the institution, the average planned expenditure for that case at the time of the study was \$12,000, of which some 60 percent was in fixed costs (in short, the provision of housing, food, administrative services) and approximately 40 percent was the cost of services by cottage parents, social workers, psychiatrists and other care and treatment staff.

Characteristics of Children in Relation to Cost

Table II indicates the relative and absolute cost of providing for an average case the various care and treatment services in the institution. However, the average case is a composite that does not exist. It is the result of services to children of various character-

istics, and costs are certainly affected by characteristics of children if the assumption is granted that care is to some degree modified to suit the child who needs it. Thus, some children receive less social work than others or more psychiatry or remedial education or psychology. How are these reflected in relation to a particular characteristic, say intelligence of the child, or his problem, or his

Table II
Mean Cost of a Case in Dollars
(based on work unit costs in each staff category)

<i>Personnel Category</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Cottage parents	\$1,851.00
Social workers	733.00
Psychiatrists	392.00
Psychologists	75.00
Resident supervisors ¹	57.00
Medical-dental	502.00
Remedial teachers	229.00
Activities	515.00
Clerical	37.00
Approximate total variable costs	\$4,400.00
Approximate other fixed costs ²	7,500.00
Approximate total cost	\$11,900.00

¹ Second echelon administrative staff, that is, assistant director, supervisors of children, activity and cottage staff.

² Computed on the basis of approximately \$7.00 per diem during child's stay in the institution plus \$448 for every intake that terminates in an admission. These costs include such items as administration, clerical services, children's housing, meals and other items not directly chargeable to the individual child.

age, or the structure of his parental unit? Because intelligence and parental unit structure discriminate well and are easy to define they will be used as examples.

During any month of service in the work unit "life adjustment" children of low intelligence (IQ 65-84) received 317 minutes of social work time, 559 minutes of psychiatry and 191 minutes of activities. During that same period average intelligence children (IQ 85-114) received 274, 283 and 141 minutes of social work, psychiatry and activities, respectively, and high intelligence children (IQ 115-154) received 260, 261 and 182 minutes of these services.

During a month of service in the same work unit—"life adjustment"—children from homes with complete parental units (both natural parents, or step-parents or

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relatives carry mother and father roles) received 1,684 minutes of cottage parent time, 320 minutes of social work and 42 minutes of resident supervisors' time. During that same period children from homes with incomplete parental units (living with mother only) received 1,672, 255, and 34 minutes of cottage parents', social workers' and resident supervisors' time, respectively. Children with no parental units (child resides with father or has no parents) received 1,520, 248, and 26 minutes of the above services.⁴ Thus, the more intelligent the child, the less time he requires in social work and psychiatry; also, the low intelligence children receive more service in activities. Similarly, the more parental unit structure exists, the more service is received from cottage parents, social workers and resident supervisors. While intelligence and parental unit structure do not discriminate in the services of all staff, the above differences are large and usually affect cost of care. The variable costs (cost of care and treatment staff) for a month in this work unit are \$141 for low IQ children, \$130 for average IQ and \$122 for high IQ. For children from complete parental units these costs are \$142, from incomplete units \$130, and for children with no existing family units \$114. Fixed costs are assumed not to vary and remain at approximately \$210 per month.

Information on the relationship of service to a single characteristic—intelligence or parental unit structure—may be helpful, then, in budgeting amount of personnel time required in a given case. For example, low intelligence children, when they receive psychiatric care, require about 100 percent more of the psychiatrist's time than do children of average and high intelligence. Also, these children are markedly more costly to care for, a matter of consequence in budgeting and perhaps in reimbursement practices.

Intelligence and parental unit are, however, only two characteristics selected for convenience in presentation. There are others, some considerably more discerning.⁵

⁴The differences between the IQ groups and the parental unit groups are all significant at the .05 level.

Viewed individually and jointly they help extract some of the variety of cost and service patterns that are partially obscured by mean work unit costs and totally hidden by mean per capita costs. They indicate that along with budgetary procedures, settings and service programs, the characteristics of children served must be considered in the computation of cost and in any attempt to compare cost among institutions or over a period of time in the same institution.

Summary

To summarize briefly, the study of cost conducted at Pleasantville Cottage School required a description of the setting and the service program and a definition of units of that service. For these units, designated as service units (complete cases) and work units (phases in case processing), time records were maintained in order to obtain their cost in time and money. Time data in conjunction with a budgetary analysis yielded the mean cost of work units and service units along with the relative costs of various programs (social work, psychiatry, remedial education, etc.) in each unit. Mean costs of work units are, however, a composite of the work with children of varied characteristics. The analysis of two characteristics—intelligence and parental unit—shows their relation to time input of staff and to overall cost of care, and indicates the desirability and perhaps necessity of considering characteristics of children in any computation of the cost of their care.

The material given reviews, only sketchily and with a few examples, the operation and yield of a long-term study on cost. The data may not necessarily be applicable to other settings. Should such data be considered worth deriving, however, the methodology for their development and a detailed report on findings will be available in published form in 1957.

⁵The following are selected other items in order of their demonstrated ability to discriminate variable costs: problem of the child and family, source of referral, psychodiagnosis of the child, social class of the family, age of the child.

A BOARD MEMBER'S VIEW OF A COST STUDY*

Morton L. Deitch†

President ‡
Jewish Child Care Association of
New York, New York City

I AM EXTREMELY pleased to report to you that the Jewish Child Care Association of New York is gratified—perhaps even a bit proud—that our Pleasantville Cottage School was chosen by the Children's Bureau and the Child Welfare League of America as the setting for the institutional cost-study project headed by Martin Wolins. It is always reassuring to know that persons outside of our own organization are sufficiently satisfied with our work to use elements of it as a kind of research laboratory. And if something of general value comes out of the study, our agency and its many staff members who co-operated so eagerly and diligently will feel more than compensated for the extra effort which has been entailed in keeping the time records over many months, for use by Mr. Wolins and his very keen and perceptive study staff.

Cost Study Important to Board Members

What is the meaning and importance of a cost study—not just the particular one about which this section has been talking, but any intelligent approach to costs—to a board member? I hope you will not deem me irreverent when I say that we can find our answer in the New Testament's Book of Luke, Chapter 14, verse 28, where this rather earthy statement appears, "Which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he hath sufficient to finish it." Actually, the question

is almost too elementary to require a response. It is like asking a business man whether he would dare to plan his operations or price his product without knowing in advance what his financial outlays will be. Such a concept would be unthinkable to him. And while social work is not a business, it cannot hope to survive, no matter how praiseworthy its objectives or noble its ideals, unless it embraces many of the fundamentals of a commercial enterprise.

Wrestling with and understanding costs, even in some of their more elementary forms, is not an easy task for many decorative (without regard to sex) board members. Their attitude toward the problem can almost be likened to Mark Twain's description of a literary classic as "something everyone wants to have read and no one wants to read." But conscientious boards and thoughtful board members have always labored with deep pre-occupation on costs, if not elaborate cost studies. Inexorable forces have compelled them to do this. For unlike profit-making organizations, they have no product with a price tag to sell to a buying public. Paradoxically those who seek our commodity are, with rare exception, unable to pay at best more than a small fraction of the expense. The result is that we must fashion our service to fit our income; and this makes it doubly important that we have as much detailed information as is possible about our costs, so that we can properly evaluate the worth of services in relation to their financial impact.

Reports of social-work agencies from time immemorial have emphasized the concern of dedicated boards with cost problems. In one of the very early reports of the Orphan Asylum of New York City, which was founded in 1807, the president reported that

* Delivered at the Child Welfare League Section, National Conference of Social Work, St. Louis, Mo., May 22, 1956, this paper is a discussion of Mr. Wolins' paper.

† The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Jewish Child Care Association of New York.

‡ Mr. Deitch's office as President has since expired.

a child was fed, clothed and instructed for 11½ cents a day. Our own agency, which has enjoyed a continuous existence for more than 130 years through unbroken corporate succession, has some interesting cost references in minutes of very early board meetings. In fact, expenses was one of the two subjects to which most of the proceedings were devoted—the other being, as you may guess, the matter of income. And we can smile today about such entries as I found in the minutes of a board meeting held approximately 100 years ago in recording the purchase of two dozen suits, three pairs of shoes, twenty-two loaves of bread, and twelve bedsteads with mattresses and appurtenances, for amounts which were itemized and totaled approximately \$116. Salaries, too, came up for discussion and it was noted at this meeting that the superintendent, who was also the religious instructor, and his wife, who acted as the matron, had their combined salary raised from \$400 to \$500 a year.

Changing Role of Administrator

Reference to these figures serves another purpose. Examination of minutes of board meetings today in any agency of size will seldom produce expense minutiae such as these. The development of social work as a skilled profession over the years, with particular emphasis upon the evolution of that versatile character to whom we refer as the Executive Director or Administrator, has of necessity wrought basic changes in the function and scope of boards of trustees. With tremendous admiration have I observed various executive directors in their daily functioning, as they run the gamut of a wide variety of problems, ranging from a serious social-work issue to the need for repairs on a building. At some point the administrator will address himself to what is one of his most critical tasks—the cold, hard facts of directing the business aspects of the agency. Here we come to the parting of the waters where the administrator now plunges down the stream which once was the primary responsibility of board members.

Louis H. Blumenthal in his most discern-

ing and frequently quoted book, *Administration of Group Work*,¹ which by the way can be applied in many aspects to administration of any social-work agency, says, "It is a major responsibility of the administrator to develop sound financial procedures. . . ." But the author stresses the importance of having both unit and per capita costs and expenditures made possible by an adequate accounting system, and for accounting he most wisely cautions the administrator to see "that the system is adjusted to the demands of agency operations and that it is kept as simple and as economical to maintain as is possible."

By all this I do not mean to say that boards have no function or responsibility in the business administration of an agency. Their responsibility is real and perhaps the ultimate burden, but the basic work of planning, study, analysis and presentation falls squarely upon the broad shoulders of the administrator. Some facetious person might remark that in the relationship between board and the administrator in this very basic aspect of board work and responsibility, the board possesses the kind of executive ability which has been defined by one wit as the art of getting the credit for all the hard work that somebody else does.

Institutional Program Is Costly

When we as board members start to think about any approach to institutional costs we realize immediately and irrespective of the accounting methods used, that the expense of running an institution of the type of Pleasantville Cottage School is extremely large. And almost naturally our thoughts start to gravitate toward the whole subject of institutions, about which much has been spoken and written in the last decade or two. For some period of time there were many who urged foster home care as the panacea for all ills, financial and otherwise. Financial justification was very simple. There were no buildings to keep in repair, no grounds to be tended, no overtaxed electric wiring to be

¹ Association Press, 1948.

replaced, and so on. There was a positive decrease of cost upon a decrease in population which could be predetermined with almost mathematical certainty. I shall not debate the social-work implications of the proposition because it is highly controversial in many respects and not susceptible to any categorical answer. We can sense today that there has been a definite slowing-up if not positive reversal of the trend.

Dr. Maurice B. Hexter² said in an address last year,

"I have a vague uneasiness that perhaps in some communities the move from group to foster care may have gone too far and too fast. The success of closure rests upon the certainty of the availability of an adequate supply of suitable foster homes to meet various and specialized emerging needs."

I have departed perhaps a bit from my text in referring to this subject but I do believe that a cost study of institutional care can be most helpful in social-work planning for the years to come. Mr. Wolins has given us a clear picture of the cost of maintaining a specialized institution such as Pleasantville. The end results of total cost are clear, even though we may have some differences of opinion among ourselves as to the proper division of that cost among its various components. Even with these differences we are still able to determine with sufficient clarity that more than fifty cents of every dollar goes for items which are not direct service to children.

The day of the large congregate institution is virtually gone. The cottage plan type institution was hailed quite rightly as a tremendous improvement. Today we look with some degree of suspicion upon the continuance of even that type of operation as feasible, at least from the financial standpoint, as a place for the care of what is loosely referred to as "normal children." As a residential treatment center or as a setting for children who for any number of reasons cannot live with and in the general community,

this type of set-up remains not only satisfactory but probably necessary. For other children who cannot be cared for in foster homes and who do not require placement in the specialized institution, the trend must be more and more toward the less costly, more flexible small group living unit located in urban surroundings. I would like to suggest, therefore, as one of the avenues of thought for board members, a study of this type of unit. While the process may be painful and the immediate cost of transition perhaps burdensome, nevertheless I hazard a prediction that within the foreseeable future this trend will become quite noticeable where the children involved are those who can best be served in what is referred to as a "general institution."

Our own agency, with the financial and planning assistance of the Greater New York Fund of the City of New York, has been experimenting with what we call "agency-owned foster home," designed to meet the needs of special groups of children who cannot be served in the traditional foster home and who do not require the specialized institution. While this type of unit lacks all of the elements of the group living unit to which I have referred, nevertheless there are many marked similarities; and as a by-product of the experiment we may demonstrate the wisdom, financial and otherwise, of the small group living setting to replace any sizable general institution, even one conforming to modern concepts.

New Approach to an Old Problem

The task that Mr. Wolins and his associates undertook represents a new and more comprehensive approach to an old problem. There have been harbingers of this project. THE CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE BULLETIN of May, 1940³ contains a discussion of the difficulties of trying to ascertain precise cost of child care, and more especially to arrive at some breakdown of "service cost." The magazine CHILD WELFARE, in its admirable

² Executive Vice-President of Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York.

³ "Financing and Costs," see page 2.

department "The Board Member Speaks," and in other articles written by professionals, has addressed itself from time to time to the importance of the problem without really making any incisive inroads. Prior to the Wolins project the nearest approach to basically helpful information probably was the Hill-Ormsby cost study.⁴ This study had its focus in the family service field which is somewhat different from the operation of institutions. It grouped services functionally into what were termed "cost centers" and included the type of service rendered and the types of activity necessary to carry out the various services. It did not delve into some of the more important problems which Mr. Wolins has sought to solve, such as the reasons for the difference in time spent in the various cost centers flowing from varying characteristics of the client, the family, the caseworker and the social environment which made institutional placement a necessity.

How Boards Can Use This Knowledge

It is not of major concern for us here today, whether we are professionals or lay people, to say whether Mr. Wolins has been successful. The important thing is that the project represents the most useful "moving in" on a complex problem which has come to my attention. And whether the study, when it comes to full fruition, gives us a workable method of ascertaining with mathematical exactitude what each and every type of child costs for care (and parenthetically, who among us can type children precisely), it nevertheless has distinct elements for channeling the thinking of board members and aiding them in discharging their responsibilities. One thing is quite clear,—that ultimately out of this will come some reasonable body of knowledge which, even though somewhat inexact, will, nevertheless, be sufficiently consistent, even in that inexactitude, to enable us to make important comparisons

and to determine what elements of service carry the heaviest financial impact.

1. Terminology is most important and frequently misleading. In my career as a lawyer I have done a certain amount of labor relations work. Early in my experience I learned that any comparison of wage or salary rates in one business enterprise with a similar enterprise, based entirely upon job titles, is the easiest way possible to be misinformed. Only when we know content and have standardization can we hope to attain comparisons that are anywhere near accurate. Mr. Wolins has set up an excellent analysis and definition of the various work units going into care itself. These are set forth, eight in number, and comprise different phases in the duration of the agency's contact with the child. Should there be a general adoption by boards and professionals of this uniform break-point and nomenclature so that the staff and lay trustees of one institution can talk in the same tongue with their counter-parts of another institution, Mr. Wolins will have accomplished a great deal.

At the present time inter-agency discussions on cost problems generally prove fruitless because each group is speaking a different language. And while I realize that rectification must be initiated by the agency administrators with their social service and accounting departments, it is at least my hope that board members will interest themselves sufficiently to try to stimulate this result. Perhaps in this field we can succeed where Esperanto failed.

2. The pressures for expendable income and funds are constantly increasing—certainly at a much more rapid pace than the general rise in the Bureau of Labor Cost of Living Index and in wage and salary scales. These factors are even more significant when one stops to consider that happily there has been a substantial decrease in the number of children in care. This is particularly true with respect to the traditional orphan who became the responsibility of society because of economic need. The statistics are revealing. Today only twelve percent of the children in placement in the entire United States have lost one parent by death, and fewer than two percent are full orphans. Two or three decades ago the figures were substantially higher. Economic assistance, which permits the full or half orphan to remain with near or distant family relatives, accounts only in part for the trend. Equally significant is the fact that from 1920 to 1953 full orphans in the nation declined from two

⁴"Cost Analysis Method for Case-work Agencies," John G. Hill and Ralph Ormsby, Family Service of Philadelphia, 1953.

percent of all children under eighteen to one-tenth percent despite an increase in the child population of approximately thirteen million. If half orphans are included, we find the decline in the same period was approximately fifty-five percent.

It is no secret that the totally disproportionate increase in the cost of care is occasioned by the fact that in those who do require the placement facilities of public and voluntary agencies, there has been a tremendous intensification of emotional problems—problems which give rise to great expense if these children are to be aided and restored to useful membership in society.

In the face of this state of affairs, what are the private agencies to do? They must solicit funds directly from the public or from a federation or community chest or seek financial support from government. No board of trustees, which is conscious of the fiduciary aspects of its position, can or should do any one of these things unless it is prepared not only to satisfy its own conscience that it is making intelligent use of the moneys put at its disposal, but also to defend on a rational basis its request for funds. Neither of these responsibilities can be discharged unless the board is fully aware of not merely what it is spending, but for what kind of facilities and services the expenditures are made. Ultimate fruition of the process started by Mr. Wolins can be of material assistance.

When board representatives approach a community chest or federation, there are questions to be answered. Not only am I grateful to the federation, of which the Jewish Child Care Association is a member agency, for the very substantial amount of financial support which we receive, but I am equally happy that its acute analysts and highly-experienced lay and professional personnel constantly scrutinize the soundness of our programs and the wisdom of our expenditures. This process may be resented by member agencies of central fund-raising bodies as an intrusion upon their autonomy. I for one, however, welcome its salutary effects. Particularly do I anticipate that the ultimate full application of the analytical approaches being developed in this study, will permit us

as an agency to show with greater precision than ever before the basic components of our service cost.

And what of government? As time goes on supplementation and subvention from this source will become increasingly important to the voluntary agencies. For the foreseeable future, private philanthropy may very well have reached a saturation point, and demands on government will mount. In New York City alone, from 1951 to 1954 there was a three percent increase in the percentage of the total cost of child care borne by public funds. With the advent on July 1, 1954 of additional payments by the city for added services rendered by the child care agencies, I have no doubt that when more recent statistics are readily available we will find an upward surge in the same direction. What is happening in my own community cannot be unique. Here again we sense that the findings of this study will furnish agency boards with added facts and figures, in their necessary process of seeking from government and justifying larger grants and payments for services rendered.

3. As time goes on agencies will make an initial or renewed effort to obtain compensation or remuneration for screening applications and for the intake process. This study should be of assistance in that direction.
4. Many child care agencies, and particularly those with treatment facilities in the medical sense, can anticipate an augmented number of private clients. As a matter of fact, I was told a few years ago by a nationally eminent psychiatrist who knew our agency thoroughly, that there were no private treatment facilities for children in our area which could rival the care which certain types of emotionally disturbed children receive at the Pleasantville Cottage School. I say this not as a matter of conceit but as an exemplification of the fact that any well-run voluntary agency, by virtue of years of experience, can attain a degree of competence that is well ahead of the developments in the field achieved by private medical institutions.

More and more the medical profession and well-to-do parents from undisrupted homes are seeking the kind of facilities that these agencies offer. Unlike the classic hospital which has different qualities of service such as a private pavilion, semi-private rooms and

wards, the child care agency must render the same quality of service to rich and poor alike, even were it possible to organize separate groupings. The fixing of an adequate fee for such private arrangements is something that has presented difficulties. Despite the fact that we know there is wide variation in the cost of caring for different kinds of children even in a single quality setting, yet we have never been able to do better than try to arrive at what we unscientifically refer to as "per capita full cost."

Time does not permit me to stray into the bypath of what "full cost" should encompass. Mr. Wolins has already suggested that most concepts are completely misleading because they generally fail to take into account such material factors as depreciation, expenses of the central fund-raising body, and many non-budgetary programs which are among the most enriching experiences that our Pleasantville children receive. I have no doubt that what we term "full cost" at Pleasantville is grossly understated, but at whatever amount it may be determined, it errs in being applied uniformly instead of taking into account the widely divergent demands of different types of children. Hopefully, as a result of Mr. Wolins' work, we may look forward to the day when we can fit a rate to the child after appropriate diagnostic study, and be prepared to justify differences on a scientific basis. In fact, if he can discover a not too complex or administratively expensive way of doing this we will be eternally grateful.

Many other uses of good service cost data, highly valuable to boards in guiding the financial and social service structuring of an agency could be outlined, but the limitations of space make that impossible. As a board member, I shall feel deeply indebted to all progress which may be made by Mr. Wolins or anyone else in furthering our ability to get at the simple fact of knowing the things for which we are paying and how much each costs. Achievement in this direction can reap rich reward in both programmatic and economic planning for a child-care institution.

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

The Executive-Board Relationship

LAST MONTH we talked about board responsibilities and assumed that the first important responsibility was the appointment of an executive qualified by training and experience to be the administrative officer of the agency. The question now to be considered is how the executive works with the board to enable it to carry out its indispensable tasks in relation to providing a quality service for the clients and toward raising the level of all services for children in the community. Probably the most important ingredients required for successful board-executive relationships are mutual understanding of, and respect for, the contributions each must make—the board for carrying the ongoing responsibility for the service, and the executive as the duly constituted administrator.

The executive carries a unique role in the agency in that he acts as the enabling person to others in furthering its goals. Since he is an enabling person, he does not usurp the prerogatives of the board, but rather helps the board carry its rightful responsibilities. How and by what means does he do this?

To know what is being accomplished and to spot problem areas which act as deterrents to effective service, the executive carries ongoing responsibility for analyzing the service of the agency. He also carries responsibility for knowing problem areas which block other services in the community. He will learn of these conditions through the staff. For instance, if ADC grants are so low as to negate the purpose for which the program was devised, or if the general assistance program is nonexistent or below the level of meeting minimum needs, he will know through the agency's clients how these conditions affect family life in the community. Armed with this knowledge he is in a position to formulate problem areas, either in relation to the service or in relation to the community network of services. He is then ready to gather experience in the field which has a bearing on these problems, to outline possible courses of actions in seeking a solution, and to present possible consequences in relation to alternative courses.

The executive then shares this kind of knowledge with the board through appropriate committees. Since it is impossible for the board as a whole to devote the necessary time to the study of all areas of concern, committee activity provides the means through which board members become knowledgeable about their own services and what is required to provide them. This is true for such concerns as staffing, financing, interpretation or change in agency policy. The board members also learn about unmet needs in the community which fortifies them to work effectively with community planning and fund-raising groups. Since board committees report regularly to the board with recommendations for action, the board as a whole has an opportunity to learn about total agency operation before taking action. Board committees, then, recommend action—not the executive, and it is the board which makes the final decisions which serve as a guide for all agency activities. Executive leadership enables the board to fulfill its ongoing responsibility for the service.

While board delegates administrative responsibility to the executive and all that this entails, the executive always needs to remember that the board carries ultimate responsibility to the community. He must, therefore, be willing and able to share problems with the board. Otherwise, the very foundation of responsible trusteeship is in jeopardy. Agency management, therefore, rests on a partnership—a partnership between the lay and professional groups, in which respective responsibilities are well-defined, understood, and respected. In this partnership the board insures continuity but delegates to the executive the leadership role, since it is only the executive who can be related to every aspect of the service and who can so operate as to enable every individual member of the board and staff to make his greatest contribution to the total program. There is no substitute for knowledge and no alternative to action if the children of our country are to be served better. However, every executive in the country must recognize the importance of lay leadership in attaining the goals of the agency. Helping to develop lay leadership is an executive's business. It is one responsibility he dare not abdicate.

JANICE BOWEN

Field Consultant, Child Welfare League of America

STATEWIDE AGENCY SERVICES*

Franklin R. King

Executive Secretary
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Burlington

The author discusses the problems involved in maintaining a unified agency where services are offered over so large an area that only through the use of branch offices can clients be served adequately.

RECENTLY voluntary agency administrators and board members have been discussing the relative merits of centralization versus decentralization of the structure of statewide services to children.

When a group of executives discussed this question in May, 1956, those having an organization with branch offices tended to favor this form; those representing centralized agencies offered good reasons to favor that type of structure. No clear statement of principles emerged to help determine the conditions under which one of these forms might offer strong advantages over the other.

In writing this article the participants admit to a prejudice. We favor *decentralization of services* as being suited to our agency purposes and to the conditions under which we operate. On the other hand, we cannot hold our plan as the current choice in all situations for it is not based on a study of the merits of various alternatives.

Our agency has been functioning for over thirty years through branch offices with a single, strong, policy-making board comprised of representatives from the various communities of the state. The board is responsible for financing the entire budget. The branch offices and their personnel are in all schematic aspects integrated parts of the organization. On paper, at least, they have no autonomous features.

This way of operating pre-existed all but a few of the present board and all of the staff and the executive. Its merits have not been questioned in any systematic way. None of us has had experience in the kind of plan in which services are extended statewide

from a single central office, nor in the kind of plan found in some states where outpost units have local boards with varying degrees of autonomy as to policy-making and financing.¹ We, therefore, know little about how such plans might be adapted for the effective application of child welfare principles and administration as we understand them.

Our assignment was to consider "the problems connected with the advisability of having branch offices, the conditions under which this seems to be the best solution and how the difficulties (in such a plan) are overcome." This, with some qualifications, we have tried to do.

Setting of Agency

Our agency operates in a state where 370,000 people live in a mountain-divided area of 9,278 square miles. Vermont ranks 46th in population, 24th in population density, and 42nd in land area. The largest city has a population of 35,000, and only two others exceed 10,000. About 64 percent of the population live in what the U. S. Census defines as "rural places," that is, under 2,500 persons. This is in direct contrast to 64 percent living in urban places in the United States as a whole. The state is not highly industrialized. Per capita wealth is well below United States average. There is comparatively little of the sophistication that may in more metropolitan areas tend to familiarize people with the philosophy and workings of social services. The advantage is that there still exists a high degree of mutual aid within communities and a firm grasp of values the loss of which seems to plague

* In preparing this paper, Mr. King consulted with and received a great deal of help from his staff and some of the board members.

¹ Robert Mulford, "Problems of a Statewide Agency," CHILD WELFARE, May, 1951.

large-city populations. The incidence of crime and delinquency is well below that of the country as a whole though in other indices of social breakdown—mental illness, births out of wedlock, and divorce—the figures compare with the average for the rest of the country.

Our place in the social service structure of the state is briefly as follows: In two of the towns there are professionally-staffed, family service agencies. The State Department of Health operates child guidance clinics in five locations in the state, some of them on a part-time basis and all giving much less psychiatric service than is needed. A large sectarian agency offers foster home care and adoption placement for children of its religious group from a central location where it also maintains a sizable group care facility. There are four other nonsectarian, voluntary, child-caring institutions of varying sizes, one of which has a casework service. A professionally-staffed maternity home, which also offers adoptive placement, serves the state from a centralized location. The Division of Child Welfare of the Department of Social Welfare works out of six branch offices. By statute it cannot offer foster care apart from commitment, and is otherwise working under handicaps of heavy case loads and lack of treatment resources in its valiant effort to serve the large group of children under its care. Poor relief, based on ancient settlement laws, is administered by local town overseers.

Agency Structure and Functions

Through the years ours has become a multiple-service program with its functions defined fairly sharply. These are:

temporary foster home care, foster home care of more indefinite duration for a small group of emotionally disturbed children, services to unmarried mothers, adoption, and service to children in their own homes.

Both board and staff have been engaged actively in social action to improve the lot of disadvantaged groups. Four office locations each serve roughly one-quarter of the state. Professional personnel consists of the executive, case supervisor, two caseworkers in the

central office and one in each of the branch offices, and a fund raiser who organizes and works with local fund-raising committees throughout the state. A part-time psychologist serves the district offices on an itinerant basis. The staff as a whole meets one day a month with a consultant in child psychiatry.

We believe that the "problems" we have been asked to discuss must be identified within a framework of principles relevant to the functions the agency has selected as potentially helpful to children.

1. "... children tend to live in relation to a whole made up of themselves and their parents . . ." and a valid child welfare service must attempt to gear itself to a quality of working relationship with parents through which "... separation is effected only after every reparative resource has been brought to bear."²
2. Qualities of intensity, continuity, and therapeutic skill in casework relationships with both parents and children are essential if a family is to be strengthened for a child; or, if a family is traumatizing to a child, the child may need help directly or through his parents to integrate this experience and, if necessary, to identify with substitute parental figures in ways that will make continued personality growth possible.
3. Substitute parents, whether adoptive or boarding, who have a capacity to adapt meaningfully to the special problems of these forms of parenthood can on rare occasion be discovered. More often, however, their potentialities must be developed. This demands a relationship of mutual confidence in which all parties work toward the same objective for the child. In this, too, intensity, continuity and diagnostically directed effort are required.
4. There must be a broad and inclusive sense of the meaning of "agency." From the point of view of community and client need, the group of agencies in a given field operate as a service structure. They achieve fullest value individually and collectively, to the extent that interagency collaborative planning brings critical thinking to bear on gaps in the structure and on the problems of individual agencies in their functioning in the structure. No agency is competent enough to be its own best friend and critic, nor alone able to find its own

² Marian Nicholson, "Knowledge Basic To Practice In Children's Field," *CHILD WELFARE*, March, 1951.

³ Ralph D. Rabinovitch, M.D., Sara Dube, M.D., and Valeria F. Juracek, M.D., "Psychiatric Considerations In Foster Home Placement and Adoption," Reprinted from *Proceedings of 53rd Annual Meeting, New York State Welfare Conference 1952*.

most appropriate place in complementing the services of other agencies.

5. The primary direct service tools of the agency are professionally disciplined personalities, casework skills, clearly defined service policies, and social action efforts. The production of these tools depends on a complex, interdependent group, working with a high degree of harmony and continuity. To sustain this, board, staff, executive, contributor and client must have and do their specialized parts in creating conditions which enable each of them to derive positive meaning and personal pride from their part in the effort.

Principles such as these are increasingly accepted for the child welfare field. All agencies attempting to give substance to them encounter the same general problems of recruiting personnel, translating theoretical knowledge into relevant practice, interpreting and evaluating program, securing adequate financing, achieving unity of effort, etc. Distance and greater geographical dispersion of service personnel, policy makers, contributors and users of service, and their separation from the central source of administrative direction, supervision and information distinguish an agency which offers such decentralized service from one that operates within the boundaries of a local community. Distance does not make the basic problems different. It only makes them more complicated.

Proximity of Client Affects Service

Discussion of how to implement the provisions for child welfare services of the original Social Security Act of 1935 brought forth a working proposition as a guide to planning. Though there was little precedent, it was seen that "services must be available where the child is." Experience has only fortified this principle.⁴ In the past ten years there has been a marked change in the approach

⁴e.g., "Experience has shown that any system of remote control is ineffective insofar as preventive and protective services are concerned. When disaster overtakes a child, the state itself or the social forces of the community may be roused to action, but often it is then too late. . . the backbone . . . is the development of resources for the care and protection of children where they live. . ." *Child Welfare Services Under the Social Security Act*, Children's Bureau Publication No. 257, pp. 2-3, 1940.

to child welfare, the high point of which, Henrietta L. Gordon asserts in her recently published book,⁵ has been the "rediscovery of parents." With her understanding of the requirement of an intensive interplay with the members of a family group in carrying out a specific service, she has illuminated the much more exacting and discriminating task the caseworker undertakes in 1957. The necessity for having services close to "where the child is" has become even more apparent:

Carl, age 10, lives with his parents in the town in which our district office is located. He is an unusually verbal child, and has said of his weekly time with his caseworker, "I am coming and I am coming and I am coming!" His story of himself, unfolded in the first year of playroom sessions, revealed an alarming degree of confusion, self-depreciation and fear of destruction. Over a period of two years, tic-like symptoms have subsided and he shows much less tendency to blame himself for the war that goes on between his parents. Initially there was little rapport with his parents. Seemingly because she could see that Carl was being helped, his mother now is actively using help for herself. The caseworker was instrumental in getting the father started in counseling with a clinically-trained minister in the community.

Much work still has to be done to help this boy and his family. If the district office were not close to them, there would have been no start or any movement away from the troubles in which they were caught. Distance spells difficulty:

Mr. Moss, with the help of his mother, had kept his family of six children warmly together since the death of his wife two years ago. Now, after the death of his mother he faced new and overwhelming problems. Our caseworker and the father devoted a great deal of fruitless effort to finding a housekeeper. The Moss's live far out in the country and do not have room for a housekeeper to live with them full time. We finally placed the two youngest children temporarily in a foster home while we worked with the father on a long-term plan. Later, after a major effort, we found a home in the same community where the three youngest children could be near their father, all could attend the same school, and could be at home weekends. The three oldest remained in their own home. The caseworker dictated: "I will always remember October 1956 as the month I all but dropped everything, drove hundreds of miles and worked with the Moss family. But they are still together in a very real sense. Mr. Moss is really with the

⁵ Henrietta L. Gordon, *Casework Services for Children*, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass., 1956, p. viii.

agency and I feel sure that we can continue to help them."

Jimmy, age 7, I.Q. very superior, had been in sixteen different foster homes before we started with him almost two years ago. Our caseworker travels ninety miles round trip every Tuesday to bring him in for a playroom session. At the end of eight months our psychiatrist stated that Jimmy was moving from the "relationship" to the treatment "phase"; after a year and a half, that there "is really remarkable progress," but that "getting really better will take a long time of the same kind of effort."

The implications of this kind of activity as far as case loads and unit costs are concerned call for a revision of thinking that is not come by easily. We see clearly that according to the concept of "effectiveness" we have stated here, we can work with only a small number of children and families at any given time. A spot map of applications, inquiries, and of cases accepted for service shows that the density is greatest in the area surrounding the district office, and that there is a strong relationship between acceptance of a case for service and its closeness to the office. This reflects the community's awareness of the service as personified by the worker who is known to and has an approved place in the everyday life of the community. Closeness makes possible enough frequency of contact between applicant and worker to facilitate the process through which the apprehensive individual becomes a client and relaxes defenses, after realizing that the worker is "tuned to his wave length." Distance impedes this process. People do not always have cars, and baby sitters may not be available for the children at home.

Statewide? To be candid about it, this term has a qualified meaning. We know that our woods and hills are full of families and youngsters grievously needing help whom we cannot reach and whom no agency is reaching. We can claim real statewide coverage only in services to unmarried mothers. In this and adoption, because we see the mother and child out of wedlock as among the least protected and most needful persons in our society, we have tried to reach out wherever help can be taken and used. But even in these instances, review of case material

tells us that distance tends to make for a less continuous and intensive working relationship. Too often we see our records overweighted with concern and activity about the baby, and lacking in the kind of focus that might help the mother to find healthier solutions to her own problems. Not only does distance account to some extent for this condition, but also the dim awareness of where to refer the mother for service and how the service may be used. Too frequently our work with the mother begins too late. The imminence of the birth of the baby demands concentration on his physical needs and long-term plans for his care.

Caseworker's Special Responsibilities

The differences in the tasks a caseworker must carry in such a program must be identified so that appropriate conditions may become a part of the working atmosphere of the agency. A job description for a district caseworker gives the impression that the position calls for a general factotum. Services to clients have priority. In addition, she is expected on occasion to represent the agency in local public relations—talking to local groups, writing articles for local press release, etc. There may be state or local welfare activities at which she should represent the agency. Often she will have sole responsibility for local interagency discussions. As in the local agencies, caseworkers are asked to serve as consultants to committees of the board, and they become an important informational source in budget planning. Through the accumulation of their observations at separate vantage points in the state, board, executive and staff have their best view of community needs. Academic training and previous experience may have offered little specific preparation for this responsibility.

The staff member who views herself strictly as a caseworker, whose need for self-expression does not arouse at least a minimum of interest in the other processes of social work, is not well-adapted to service in the statewide agency. She must have ability to shift from one process to another and to

find satisfaction in seeing herself as part of a broader force in the agency and in the community.

There is the current question of whether caseworkers must forever be apprentices and never master craftsmen in the sense of practicing apart from close supervision. Ability to function independently and to be sustained by periodic supervisory sessions and long-distance telephone calls when the going gets too rough is necessary, when the supervisor is 100 miles away.

All this adds up to a large order and we see one serious disadvantage in it. The lone worker has no one to "cover" for her. It may seem that there is no way in which a much-needed vacation can be taken. Emergencies can become exhausting and soul-wracking. There are times when professional disciplines do not enable the individual to find within herself the answer to the acutely personal feelings of frustration and overwhelming sense of responsibility that the casework job inevitably generates. Balance can best be regained when there is someone at hand who can react with both the head and the heart to the tale of woe.

These, therefore, are jobs for fully trained, experienced, mature and creative people. The difficulties in recruiting people of this quality must be obvious. Not everyone wants to be or can be a pioneer, but there is room for self-expression in the wide open spaces that some will seek. The picture of the job is permeated with the consequences of distance, isolation, and communities where appreciation of a professional helping service has as yet gained little place in the provincial way of life. There is the danger that isolation might breed a point of view in which the philosophy and practice of the district office become differentiated from the main stream of the agency.

Obtaining Sense of Unity

As a staff we recently inquired as to what basic conditions might tend to reduce this feature of isolation and to offer, in spite of it, a feeling of being firmly a part of an entity in which the individual can have security

about being understood, valued, and supported. In discussing this, both structural and intangible elements were noted. Again, they are not "different," rather, they call for heightened awareness:

1. Having responsibility and authority run in a clear line up through supervisor and executive to a central board, gives the staff member a clearly defined field in which to operate.
2. An attitude, actively shared by all parties, that "each party to the affairs of an agency has a responsibility to make known those problems he is in the best position to identify," and that "all affairs of the agency are open to scrutiny," encourages staff members to be eager about referring policy questions, seeking reassurance and backing from the central office, or asking for reconsideration of working conditions.
3. The atmosphere should allow for discussion of agency affairs in which the exchange of conflicting points of view is encouraged, not merely tolerated, and in which the parties accept tendencies to project hostility, to be defensive and resort to retaliation. Central offices should serve, among other ways, as places to blow off steam safely. This makes it possible for people to move on to goal-oriented thinking.
4. Everybody works at this task. Incentive, needed by all, is made up of both reminders of the responsibility and acknowledgment, freely given for work well done.

In a field in which there is so much to be learned, professional self-respect requires a continual growth experience.

A thread of communication is woven tightly through all of this. Communication, aimed at motivating people, helping them to be clear as to their role in the workings of the organization, engaging them in thinking about evaluation and planning, and distributing satisfactions to them, is a primary tool of coordination in any enterprise. In a decentralized agency, because face-to-face dealings are less frequent, the problem of achieving this is more difficult. A widely scattered board can meet less frequently as a whole and in committee. In this too, there is the danger of fragmentation. The executive may feel driven to overplay his role in the tasks of policy and decision making.

An astute board member remarked laughingly to the executive, "My boy, don't let this happen. It will elongate your neck!"

Staff may not become sufficiently involved

in offering board and executive a sound basis for their actions. Our experience is that board members arrive best and most enthusiastically at conviction about policy making, that is, a sense of "what this is all about and why it demands this kind of a philosophical approach," through what can only be described as a process of vicarious experience. They need to know what dilemma and deprivation feel like to a parent or a child and what casework responsibility feels like to a staff member. Opportunities for staff members to dramatize the service and for board members to identify themselves with clients and the goals of the agency through case committees and casual discussions are vitally important. The acutely sensitive part board members play in these discussions has done much to give caseworkers a feeling of working from a strong base in the agency.

More than ordinary reliance must be placed on the written word. Contrary to our reservations about this, we find that the "associates in the Society" do read the fairly heavy stream of reports that issue from the central office. We find that a monthly page and a half printed summary of casework activity produces very active "feed back" from board members. In this we have taken pains to illustrate the various forms of service, explain principles in relation to specific case material, highlight the activity of individual staff members, point out values and limitations in the social service structure of the state, etc. It meant much to staff recently when minutes of a board meeting arrived on their desks stating: "Case load report for October was read. Congratulations to Miss Hatch and her staff for a job well done."

Local communities here offer little of the specific kind of opportunity needed to restoke professional fires. The agency must try to compensate for this. While we are looking for ways to improve in this, we can point to some of the requirements. The budget slice for professional consultants, conference and institute attendance, for library and staff meeting time must be a little large. Staff members, as well as case supervisor and

executive, can at times wear the teacher's hat in group study of problem areas.

Fragmentation need not become destructive if board, staff and executive can give systematic thought to mapping out the problems of the agency, or when a study is assigned to them, they accept the fact that the time required from start to finish of a project may be longer than in a more closely knit agency. There may also need to be more awareness that if board member study is concentrated on a part of the agency, board members gain from this a capacity for informed judgments about its other parts as well. Fortunately, principles and the psychological knowledge from which they stem are generic.

To develop a policy on services to parents out of wedlock required about a year of successive case committee discussions of summaries from the literature and related case material. The major objective was the policy, but the gains in generic understanding and in a feeling of mutual respect and ease of give and take between board and staff were equally significant. A minister board member said, "A year ago I would have felt that I should read the scriptures in helping a mother out of wedlock to repent. I would not do that today." A banker observed, "The thing I have enjoyed most is that we enjoy vigorous disagreement. No one ever goes away mad." A caseworker said, "I no longer feel that I have to make a point of reassuring board members that I do not condone a birth out of wedlock." Obviously, "distribution of satisfactions," like happiness, must more often be a by-product rather than something directly sought.

Problems of Maintaining Agency Cohesion

Up to now most of our attention has been given to some of the problems in achieving unity in a dispersed staff and board. We are aware of the error that may creep into an all-out striving for this. We may spend so much energy on this that we may neglect doing our part in creating public opinion favorable to the support and use of an adequate structure of agencies, including our own. The problems in promoting unity of effort with other agencies may likewise be slighted.

When decentralization interferes with agency cohesion we see the sense of the

warning ". . . having autonomy entirely centered with the state board and administrative staff."⁶ But we are wary about a proliferation of local boards and groups through which local points of view are represented in a haphazard way. Too often elsewhere, it seems, these have resulted either in having the branch worker look confusedly in two directions at two sets of conflicting policies or it has meant gathering together a local advisory group whose interest wanes when they find they have nothing more useful to do than listen to "interpretation." A suggestion that may have promise was made to us by the Child Welfare League of America in a recent survey of our agency. This envisions reorganizing our board committees so that board members, plus other local community representatives around each district office, would become responsible for one of the standing committees. This committee would be staffed by the district caseworker and would also function as a case committee, that is, a two-way street between the office and its surrounding community and between central board and administration and the community.

Other larger communities are able to afford specialized division of labor such as councils of social agencies for spearheading studies and bringing agencies together on common problems. This kind of organization does not seem possible in our state, even to the extent of employing a part-time executive for our state conference. It is to the great credit of the Vermont agencies that they have not stood transfixed by the difficulties in this situation. Working entirely through people employed full-time in demanding jobs and with a good measure of citizen participation, they have carried on a vigorous program of study and action. Last year a splendid effort went into the study of facilities for treatment of the youthful offender. In the coming year there will be, among others, committees studying the adequacy of services for unmarried mothers and the need for protective services. In addition to

the support agency administrations have given to these efforts, it is clear that the warm fellowship between representatives of the separate agencies has been the lubricant in their workings. We observe that decentralization of personnel makes possible closer working relationships between the branches of this agency and other local services. This facilitates the wide and friendly acquaintance that becomes important in this community organization effort.

Is decentralization of service personnel linked in any way with fund raising? In general we would say that to the extent that outposts bring the agency closer to the community threshold, it serves this purpose. We would not claim that it has made fund raising easy! Nor have we made full use of the potential that having offices relatively close to over 250 local fund-raising committees may have for us. We have frankly been too preoccupied recently with re-casting our program, building board, and other internal matters to work systematically on this. But there are evidences of how this potential has influenced the rather marked growth of bequest funds for this small agency in the last few years, and of how it may be put to other good financing and interpretive uses in the future:

A bequest of \$13,500 was recently received from an aged bachelor who for long years had been a regular \$5.00 contributor. The general practitioner in the deceased's village had been favorably impressed by two examples of agency service. These were the sensitive placement of a fourteen-year-old orphan girl and skillful help to an unmarried mother, both of them referred by the physician. It was he who advised the deceased to leave his worldly goods to the Society.

Conclusion

A disquieting note creeps into our thinking about the questions we have considered here. Bowlby, Hutchinson, Anna Freud, et al, disenchant us about purely environmental treatment; we see that "The Hidden Parent" is always with the child and that severe trauma is not speedily overcome. If family-centered casework, characterized by intensity, continuity and therapeutic skill, is the valid basic principle to which organiza-

⁶ Mulford, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

tional processes must become geared; if the practical reality is that casework services must be close to where children live; what does this imply in relation to the goal of having available for each child in a timely way the type of service most appropriate for him? How close are we to this goal now? How many communities have even a rough measure of the relationship between the numbers of its people affected by social breakdown and the extent to which social services are in touch with them?

Can we realistically look forward to a time when the American people will support the closely spaced network of services that our presumptions would indicate they need? Will people also be more aware of when help is needed and have less culturally-induced resistance to use of help? Or, does the choice lead more in the direction of planning for more basic kinds of economic and social provision—family allowances, family education and perhaps other means that would forestall rather than emphasize repair of the damage of blighting experience?

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Midwest Regional Conference

March 18, 19, 20
Hotel Schroeder, Milwaukee, Wis.
Chairman: Major Paul H. Nolte, Executive Director
Volunteers of America Day Nurseries
Milwaukee, Wis.

Central Regional Conference

March 21, 22, 23
Hotel Statler, Detroit, Mich.
Chairman: Miss Ruth Bowen, Supervisor
Children's Division
State Department of Social Welfare
Lansing, Mich.

New England Regional Conference

March 28, 29, 30
Hotel Statler, Hartford, Conn.
Chairman: Miss Eleanor P. Sheldon, Director
The Family and Children's Service of
Stamford, Inc.
Stamford, Conn.

South Pacific Regional Conference

April 4, 5, 6
Sir Francis Drake Hotel, San Francisco, Calif.
Chairman: Miss Winifred Cobbledick,
District Director
Children's Home Society of California
Oakland, Calif.

Northwest Regional Conference

April 11, 12, 13
Olympic Hotel, Seattle, Wash.
Chairman: Frank S. Bayley, Jr.,
President of the Board
Ryther Child Center
Seattle, Wash.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO The School of Social Service Administration

Chicago 37, Illinois

SERIES I: July 1-July 12*

1957 Summer Workshops

1. Professional Writing *Rachel Marks*
2. Psychiatric Consultation in the Public Agency *Esther K. Schour*
3. Problems in the Administration of Social Services *Phyllis Osborn*
4. Family-Centered Casework *Sidney J. Berkowitz*
5. Supervision *Charlotte Towle*
6. Public Assistance: Criteria for Selection of Cases for
More than Minimum Service *Sarah Riley*
7. Current and Recent Research in Casework *Lilian Ripple*
8. Casework with Hard-To-Reach Families *Alice Overton*
9. Basic Ingredients in Residential Care for Children *Susanne Schulze*

SERIES II: August 5-August 16*

1. Community Planning for Psychiatric Services *John Ham*
2. Work Adjustment of the Physically and Mentally Handicapped *William Gellman*
3. Principles of Service to Unmarried Parents *Mary Jean Clark*
4. Social Work and Rehabilitation Concepts in Services to
the Handicapped *Alice James*
5. Authority in Casework: Problems and Skills *Elliot Studt*
6. Supervision *Dorothy Aikin*
7. Developing the Service Content of Public Assistance *Marian Tillotson*

* Workshop schedules in either series will be so arranged that attendants may register for two workshops

Further Information and Application Form on Request

READERS' FORUM

On Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancies

Dear Editor:

Leontine Young suggests¹ that some married women can become pregnant only out of wedlock.

"A considerable number of these women have never had a legitimate child, although they often say they have tried to do so and had wanted a baby by their husbands. Yet they will often become pregnant almost immediately after only one or two sexual contacts with another man. Almost invariably this other man is a casual acquaintance who has no real or continuing interest in the woman, nor she in him."

Of 434 white clients of our Confidential Maternity Service, we found fifty-seven (thirteen percent) who were married and pregnant by a man other than the husband. In considering Miss Young's suggestion we checked to see how many of these had never previously borne children in wedlock. Of these fifty-seven women, we found only twelve who had not previously had legitimate children. Examining the case records of these twelve provided little evidence for the hypothesis of psychogenic marital sterility. All were between eighteen and twenty-five years of age. Two clients were already pregnant by a man other than their bridegroom when they were wed. Four had been married less than three years with their husbands away in military service nearly all that time. Two had lived with the husband only for several months after marriage and had then separated from him. One had been married four times with no divorces and was now pregnant by a fifth man. Three clients had been married five years or longer, and one was the only wife to discuss her desire to have children by her husband. She had miscarried four years earlier when she had undulant fever. Her husband had been overseas sixteen months at the time of her out-of-wedlock pregnancy. In all cases, the husband had been overseas for at least a year preceding conception.

In general, reading these records suggests

¹ *Out of Wedlock*, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, 1954, p. 31.

that separation from the husband and emotional instability, including promiscuity and early sexual intercourse, are more crucial in explaining these pregnancies out of wedlock than a hypothesis of psychogenic marital sterility resulting from the desire to be sole possessor of the baby.

The question of the dynamic significance of previous childlessness led us to wonder about its frequency in our population. Among 225 white clients who were pregnant at referral and who were currently or had previously been married, seventeen percent had previously borne children out of wedlock; seventy-six percent had previously borne children in wedlock. Some, of course, had borne children under both conditions so that altogether eighty percent had previously had children in and/or out of wedlock. The previously childless client, among those presently or previously married, is certainly in the minority.

Leontine Young's suggestion, about the married client's "casual" acquaintance with the man who fathered the out-of-wedlock baby, led us to look more closely at this aspect of our data. Married women who are pregnant out of wedlock apparently constitute a different group from those who are single (never married), divorced, or widowed and pregnant out of wedlock. We found that whereas sixty-three percent (154/245) of the group not presently married had an emotional investment in the baby's natural father, this was true of only thirty-four percent (14/41) of the married clients. The important element of our definition of "emotional investment" is that without an emotional investment any other man would have served as well; there was no emotional concern with the baby's father as a *person*; he was only the instrument of pregnancy.

Further, when we compare the proportion of clients who had known the baby's father for less than one month (a "pick-up" contact, since in no case was there any evidence of emotional investment in the man) we find that about seventeen percent (7/42) of the married group were pregnant as a result of such "pick-up-contacts," while five percent

(11/235) of the not-presently-married group were. Both sources of evidence point in the same direction. There is a greater tendency for women who are married and pregnant out of wedlock to have become pregnant as a result of relations with a man who was of no emotional importance to them. Also the highest proportion of pregnancies as a result of "pick-up contacts" is among women who are presently married. Comparison between girls who are single (never married) and those who are divorced or widowed (previously married) did not reveal a comparable difference and so they have been classified together as "not-presently-married."

Since it was possible that the presently-married group represented a different age class than the not-presently-married group did, we examined these two groups within different age classes. Within each age classification, the findings were in the same direction that has been described. We were thus convinced that the significant variable is marital status and not age.

The last point of interest concerns the percentage of clients who were pregnant as a result of a "pick-up acquaintance." Miss Young reported in 1945 concerning a group of 100 unmarried mothers:

"Less than one fourth of the group had even known the man well enough to make him a real person and only a scattered handful of these made even a pretense of caring for him in any adult fashion."²

In *Out of Wedlock* Miss Young wrote:

"An astonishing number of unmarried mothers meet the fathers of their babies in casual unconventional fashion. They 'pick up' a man in trains, in hotels, at dances and large parties, or they meet him on 'blind dates' with casual acquaintances."

In the total group of clients (white, pregnant on referral) on whom we had such information, only 6.5 percent (18/277) were pregnant as a result of a "pick-up acquaintance."

The striking difference between Miss Young's figure of about seventy-five percent and our own of 6.5 percent may reflect a difference in defining "pick-up." It may, however, reflect a difference in decades and cul-

tural milieu. The situation for girls during World War II in the New York City area was probably more conducive to casual sexual liaisons than was the situation in Oregon during 1952-55. Another possibility is that the last ten years have seen a lessening in the amount of social stigma attached to pregnancy out of wedlock so that agencies now serve a different population than they did ten years ago.³ One conclusion seems warranted, samples must be carefully described so that generalizations made from them are seen in relation to the population from which the sample was drawn. Only in this way can we be sure that the explanations of out-of-wedlock pregnancies are not based on a few dramatic instances.

JOHN L. WALLEN

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Portland, Oregon

Clarification of the Special School Milk Program

In the October 1956 issue of *CHILD WELFARE* we reported that the special school milk program has been extended so that social agencies including institutions can now request reimbursement for some of the fluid milk consumed by their children. While the bill stated specifically that the purpose was "to encourage increased consumption," it had not been entirely clear that in applying for reimbursement the agency would have to show that the children were actually receiving more fluid milk than they had previously received. It has now been interpreted clearly to mean that where children who had been given one glass of fluid milk a day were now being given two glasses of milk, the agency would be reimbursed for the second glass. Or where an agency wished to increase the milk consumption from two glasses to three glasses for some or all of its children, the increased consumption would be reimbursable.

³ Editor's Note: The statement in the April, 1954 *CHILD WELFARE*, "Community Attitudes Toward the Unmarried Mother," by Jane Calkins, calls attention to the fact that unmarried mothers continue to be stigmatized. Further comments are invited.

² *Understanding the Psychology of the Unmarried Mother*, Family Service Assoc. of America, 1947, p. 13.

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

A State Studies Its Service

From a report of a survey of children twelve years of age and under in foster home care.

CHILD WELFARE agencies have been concerned for a long time with the movement of children in and out of foster care. The majority of agencies have as their goal working with parents of placed children toward returning children to their families, and where this is not possible, toward freeing the child both legally and emotionally for placement for adoption. Neither of these two goals can be achieved with every child in foster care—sometimes because of the child's severe emotional disturbance, sometimes for other reasons. However, the quantity of child welfare staffs, the size of case loads, and the quality of supervision and staff training problem, are very telling factors.

Child Welfare Services of the Missouri Division of Welfare, in its effort to give the best possible service, initiates studies to help in evaluating services to children. Recently it studied the status of children twelve years of age and under who were receiving foster care. The study does not represent an exhaustive research project, although these preliminary steps might eventually lead to such a project.

The purposes of the study were to:

- 1) provide an objective evaluation of children in Division of Welfare foster home care by the worker, and her child welfare supervisor;
- 2) determine trends in casework service to not only the children in foster care, but to the parents of these children;
- 3) attempt to determine the number of legally adoptable children;
- 4) determine why legally adoptable children were not presently being considered for adoption;
- 5) determine diagnostic skills of the worker and her child welfare supervisor in relation to the above.

At a State child welfare supervisors' staff meeting the study schedule was presented to the supervisors and suggestions for change were welcomed. A revised schedule was then developed. This was distributed to child welfare supervisors who give at least monthly supervision to child welfare workers, to child welfare aides, and to the county caseworkers

throughout the state who give direct services to children. Each worker and her child welfare supervisor evaluated and completed the schedule on the situation of each child in the Division of Welfare foster home care who was twelve years of age and under, including children in pre-adoptive homes. This review excluded children in independent adoptive homes, where child welfare workers were asked by the juvenile court to study the child and the petitioner and supervise the child for the nine-months-period prior to final adoption. The evaluation was done during March 1956.

About the Children

The study included 530 children in Division of Welfare foster family homes. 79.5 percent were "committed to the care and custody" or "to the guardianship of the Division of Welfare" by the juvenile or magistrate court. Only two children remained in the custody of their own parents or relatives. The remaining children were in the custody of foster ("free") or adoptive parents.

Missouri's present adoption law states that a child is eligible for adoption upon the relinquishment by his parents or when he is "willfully abandoned" or "willfully neglected" for one year.¹ Missouri's statutes do not include a termination of parental rights section. However, the Missouri Springfield Court of Appeals Decision defines "willful neglect" to mean that the child is legally free for adoption if, after one year of placement the parents, with help, fail to provide an adequate home for him. This places considerable responsibility on the agencies to provide skilled casework services to parents and assist them toward becoming adequate parents.²

The study showed that in eighty-five percent of the situations the juvenile judge, either in the county of original jurisdiction or in the county in which the child was placed, or in both counties, construed "willful neglect" in the same general terms as the Court of Appeals Decision. In respect to relinquishment, in 158

¹ Given in *Southwest Reporter*, pp. 257-388, 1953.

² The juvenile judges in the thirty-six judicial circuits in Missouri vary in their interpretation of "willful neglect."

of the situations both parents had signed a relinquishment and in 217 one parent had signed a relinquishment.

It appears that the largest percent of children in foster care are living in counties where they might be considered legally adoptable.

Of these 530 children studied, 93.4 percent were in foster family home care and 6.6 percent in foster group care. Over half of all the children or 53.4 percent, were in foster boarding care; 34.7 percent in pre-adoptive homes; and 5.3 percent in free foster homes.

From these figures it is concluded that more than one-third of the children studied were already in pre-adoptive homes. Further, the use of free foster care is diminishing where good standards of child welfare practices are continually emphasized.

In respect to the 183 children who were in pre-adoptive care, the largest proportion or 42.6 percent were less than two years of age; 30.1 percent were between the years of six and twelve; and the smallest percent or 27.3 percent were between the years of two and six.

One of the encouraging findings of the study was that the largest number of children (68.2 percent) were in foster care two years or less. About one-third (31.8 percent) of the children were in foster care over two years, and 11.9 percent of these children were in foster care between two and three years. There were 19.9 percent of the children in foster home care longer than three years.

79.5 percent studied had no diagnosed physical, mental or emotional handicap. The largest percent of children with such handicaps fell in the group of mentally handicapped (8.9 percent). The fact that only 3.6 percent of children were diagnosed as having emotional handicaps raises some question about soundness of casework diagnosis. It is recognized, for example, that the majority of children in foster family care have considerable guilt, longing for their own parents, and other sources of anxiety.

About the Parents

It was interesting that the largest number of parents—353—were married, while 177 were unmarried.

Since approximately one-fourth of the workers and their supervisors did not answer the questions regarding the relationship between parents and child, it was difficult to evaluate this. This would seem to indicate that workers need to be much more aware of parent-child relationship of children placed in foster care—as much as they are in respect to the child who is being given service in his own home.

The progress which the parent had made toward re-establishing the family was one criterion of development for parenthood. In almost three-fourths of the situations, it was found that the parents had made some progress. However, the discouraging aspect of these findings was that more than half of the workers and supervisors failed to answer this question. The report indicated that those workers and supervisors who were concerned with giving consistent casework service to parents of placed children had helped 74.1 percent of the parents make real progress toward re-establishing the home.

General Conclusions

The study indicates that, of the 530 children, a large percentage of children were legally eligible for adoption, for a large number of the children did not present any serious physical, mental and emotional handicaps. It appeared that the agency was giving a fairly short-term service, since of the children in foster care, 68.2 percent were in foster care less than two years and 11.9 percent for under three years.

That more than a third of these children were in pre-adoptive care showed that the staff was alert to adoption planning.

However, that so few workers and their supervisors reported on the relationship between parents and child and the change in the capacity of parents for parenthood would indicate that workers needed more help in these areas:

- 1) use of casework skills in observing and evaluating parent-child relations during placement;
- 2) the giving of consecutive, skilled casework services to parents beginning from intake and continuing through placement, until family reunion takes

place, or until the family and children are helped to accept permanent separation where indicated.

It will be interesting to learn how this study will affect the quality of service given.

LORENA SCHERER

State Child Welfare Supervisor
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BOOK NOTES

Every Other Bed, by Mike Gorman. The World Publishing Company, 1956. 318 pp. with index. \$4.00.

The Therapeutic Community, by Maxwell Jones, M.D. Basic Books, Inc., 1953. 186 pp. with index. \$3.50.

The author of *Every Other Bed* is of the opinion that public indifference and complacency are responsible in large measure for the inadequate treatment of the mentally ill in the United States of America. One senses his anger at the past, his impatience with the present and his excitement at the prospect of a more productive and compassionate future. The contents are, in a sense, a little encyclopedia of current information concerning the mental health problem. About the first third of the chapters have to do with the numbers of ill people, the cost, research money available and the like. The middle third deals succinctly and yet clearly with the improved attitude of the Federal Government, and particularly of the Council of State Governments, to this problem. It is apparent that in most of the governments (Federal and State) improvement in attitude and thus in finance is due to a few leaders like the author who had courage and persistence. The rest of the book enumerates in terse vignette style many research projects that range from chemistry to social anthropology, providing a valuable source of information about the general field of psychiatric research. The material is presented in a vibrant, interesting and exciting style, so that although the description of one project is quickly followed by that of another, the reader does not tire but goes eagerly on.

It is unfortunate that the author did not accord all psychiatric treatment methods

equal rights of emphasis and fairness. Obviously, he feels that biological research is destined to be more profitable in finding new facts about mental illness than is that of psychology or psychoanalysis. He is particularly critical of psychoanalysis as a method of research and a means of treatment, and one cannot escape the feeling that there is an element of bias in his attack upon this discipline. This reviewer was sorry to find this in what is a remarkably good book, considering the breadth and depth of its material. The reader must keep in mind that the writer is a layman and evaluate his technical judgments on that basis. He seems to be on more familiar ground when writing about concrete material that can be weighed, measured or seen, and has more difficulty in dealing with subjects having to do with perception and emotion.

The book should be read by everyone interested in the problem of mental health. It will stimulate its readers, lay and professional, to greater efforts no matter what their particular interest and competence might be. In a word, it is a good and useful book. The author is a crusader and an effective one.

Although written in 1953, a still important book which reports on pioneer work in social psychiatry and deserves to be studied, particularly by those who are not thoroughly familiar with this type of psychiatric treatment, is *The Therapeutic Community*. Those interested in social psychiatry will have read and reread what to them must indeed be a "bible." Dr. Maxwell Jones and his associates have written primarily about their Industrial Neurosis Unit at Belmont Hospital, in England. The reviewer would like to caution the new reader lest he be deceived by what at first glance seems to be a rather uncomplicated method of social psychiatric treatment. This is because the volume is skillfully written and describes a complicated program in brilliantly uncomplicated terms.

The Therapeutic Community ought to be read by all those who are within the psychiatric discipline. It is difficult to pick out any one group that should be especially interested in it because it pictures the in-

tegrated working of a total force for a single purpose, and one quickly learns that the psychiatrist in this grouping is only one member of the team and that the nurse, for example, is just as important and is accorded an equal therapeutic status. There are those who have difficulty in comprehending the concept of the psychiatric team. It is recommended that they read this book because it not only describes such an operation in theory, but also depicts the activity in practical function.

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The Happy Child: A Psychoanalytical Guide to Emotional Growth, by Irene M. Josselyn, M.D.
 Random House, Inc., New York, 1955. 410 pp. \$3.95.

Being previously exposed to the lucid writing of Dr. Josselyn made the reading of *The Happy Child* an anticipated pleasure. Her treatment of the combination of factors affecting growth and development, set in the psychoanalytic framework, is excellent. By the use of skillful analogies; the vivid material she brings from practice; and the phrasing of psychiatric concepts in the vernacular of everyday experience, Dr. Josselyn's book makes an excellent resource book for parent education.

However, parents are bombarded with so much printed advice in capsule form that it is difficult to know whether they are interested in the broader frame of reference of the stages of development as reviewed in *The Happy Child*. Certainly, if parents are seeking an authoritative answer to a child's problems or material for preconceived ideas, Dr. Josselyn's writing avoids the pitfalls of the "ready answer." She also circumvents the danger of giving the parents any incentive to assume a clinical instead of a parent attitude toward their child. In describing problems there is a good balance between psychoanalytic evaluation of parent and child, the social climate, and the interplay of attitudes in the particular circumstances. Dr. Josselyn keeps

the process of growing into adulthood from turning into a maze of glibly labeled complexes, while at the same time she maintains the impact of values stemming from a knowledge of self. As Dr. Josselyn states early in her chapter on "Emotional Maturity":

"To a certain extent behavior remains overly determined by parental attitudes valid in childhood but invalid in adult life. To a certain extent everyone deals with reality as if it were an echo of childhood rather than a new experience."

Professionals may shy away from *The Happy Child* simply because it is a treatment of an old theme: the psychosexual stages of development. However, Dr. Josselyn spends a good part of her book on such specifics as fears, temper tantrums, stealing, the ill child, and the school and the child. This relates itself well to needs such as a basic text for the training of houseparents.

In brief, I had no reservations about *The Happy Child*. It is an excellent resource for interpretation by professionals and an excellent text for training houseparents, but it will have to struggle through the already crowded literature in this field.

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Mental Health Week

The ninth annual Mental Health Week will take place April 28-May 4, under the co-sponsorship of The National Association for Mental Health, Inc. and the National Institute of Mental Health, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. This year's theme will be "The Mentally Ill *Can* Come Back—Help Them," and will stress the hopeful outlook for the mentally sick as well as the need for citizen action in behalf of these people. For information on how to participate write to your state mental health association or to The National Association for Mental Health, Inc., 10 Columbus Circle, New York 19, N. Y.